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India ousts U.S. aide in spy case

NEW DELHI (UPI)—A U.S. diplomat with suspected CIA links has been expelled for alleged involvement in an espionage network that included three retired Indian military officers and a civilian, a newspaper reported yesterday.

The Indian government and the U.S. Embassy refused to comment on the report, but an embassy spokesman said the diplomat had been reassigned to a post in Washington. The four Indians have been charged with trying to obtain and sell defense secrets.

The independent Indian Express said

U.S. Embassy First Secretary Harry L. Wetherbee "has left India after the discovery of his alleged involvement in the espionage network which was recently busted by the intelligence bureau."

"The diplomat, suspected to be a U.S. Central Intelligence Agency operator in Asia, was working under the cover of policy planning officer with the U.S. Embassy here," the newspaper said.

It said Mr. Wetherbee was asked one night at the end of November "to leave the country within 24 hours."

U.S. Embassy spokesman William Miller said Mr. Wetherbee "left some time ago on personal travel. Subsequently, he has been assigned in Washington, D.C."

Mr. Miller would not disclose the date of Mr. Wetherbee's departure, if it was voluntary or his new assignment.

Reports that the three former military officers and the civilian allegedly tried to obtain defense secrets for sale to the CIA appeared earlier this week in several Indian newspapers.